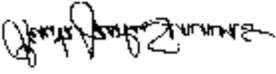


U. S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION TWWIIA
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TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 18-99

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
 ALL STATE WORKER ADJUSTMENT LIAISONS
 ALL STATE EMPLOYMENT SECURITY AGENCIES
 ALL ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER SYSTEM LEADS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS 
 Deputy Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Ticket to Work and the Work Incentives Improvement
 Act of 1999

1. Purpose. To provide information to the One-Stop service delivery system on new work incentives for individuals with disabilities.

2. Background. On December 17, 1999, President Clinton signed into law the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) of 1999 or PL. 106-170. TWWIIA is the culmination of several years of work by individuals with disabilities, their advocates, the Administration, and Congress. The new law focuses on increasing access to health care, as well as employment, training and rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.

“Today, we say with a simple, but clear voice, no one should have to choose between taking a job and having health care”

*President Bill Clinton
 December 17, 1999 signing of the TWWIIA*

In the past there were specific barriers encountered by individuals on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) that impeded their ability to enter or re-enter the work force. Individuals receiving assistance through these programs faced specific income and resource limitations that meant a choice between work and continued access to needed health care. Individuals with disabilities seeking specialized employment services such as those authorized in Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act (the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended) were often faced with limited resources and resulting waiting lists.

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The new TWWIIA addresses these issues by allowing an individual to maintain his/her Medicare or Medicaid while working, establishes a new "Ticket to Work and self-Sufficiency" program (the "Ticket"), reauthorizes demonstration grant authority for the Social Security Administration (SSA), and establishes a new benefits counseling program.

Although individuals with disabilities are expected to have access to generic One-Stop services, the "Ticket" represents an opportunity for additional resources to the One-Stop delivery system to assist in their provision of services to people with disabilities.

With a "Ticket", disabled beneficiaries may obtain employment services, rehabilitation services, or other support services from an "Employment Network". The TWWIIA specifically cites One-Stops as potential Employment Networks. As an Employment Network, a qualified One-Stop would provide employment services, rehabilitation services or other support services which would subsequently be reimbursed by the Social Security Administration for associated costs based upon the total savings to the Social Security Trust fund. State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies may also elect to participate as an Employment Network.

The TWWIIA describes the general provisions of the "Ticket" at Section 101:

(a) In General - The Commissioner shall establish a Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, under which a disabled beneficiary may use a ticket to work and self-sufficiency issued by the Commissioner in accordance with this section to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services from an employment network which is of the beneficiary's choice and which is willing to provide such services to such beneficiary.

(b) Ticket System -

(1) Distribution of Tickets - The Commissioner may issue a ticket to work and self-sufficiency to disabled beneficiaries for participation in the Program.

(2) Assignment of Tickets - A disabled beneficiary holding a ticket to work and self-sufficiency may assign the ticket to any employment network of the beneficiary's choice which is serving under the Program and is willing to accept the assignment.

(3) Ticket Terms - A ticket issued under paragraph (1) shall consist of a document which evidences the Commissioner's agreement to payan employment network, which is serving under the Program and to which such ticket is assigned by the beneficiary, for such employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services as the employment network may provide to the beneficiary.

The TWWIIA also establishes the qualifications for eligibility as an Employment Network at Section 101:

(f) Employment Networks.--

``(1) Qualifications for employment networks.--

``(A) In general.--Each employment network serving under the Program

shall consist of an agency or instrumentality of a State (or a political subdivision thereof) or a private entity, that assumes responsibility for the coordination and delivery of services under the Program to individuals assigning to the employment network tickets to work and self-sufficiency issued under subsection (b).

“(B) One-stop delivery systems.--An employment network serving under the Program may consist of a one-stop delivery system established under subtitle B of title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2811 et seq.).

“(C) Compliance with selection criteria.--No employment network may serve under the Program unless it meets and maintains compliance with both general selection criteria (such as professional and educational qualifications, where applicable) and specific selection criteria (such as substantial expertise and experience in providing relevant employment services and supports).

“(D) Single or associated providers allowed.--An employment network shall consist of either a single provider of such services or of an association of such providers organized so as to combine their resources into a single entity. An employment network may meet the requirements of subsection (e)(4) by providing services directly, or by entering into agreements with other individuals or entities providing appropriate employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services.

All TWWIIA programs and services will be phased in over the next four years. The regulations are expected to be published by SSA before the first of next year. The first ten “Ticket” pilot States will be chosen by then as well.

These new programs represent a significant change in public disability policy that will increase the opportunity for beneficiaries of both SSDI and SSI to become self-sufficient as well as enhance the ability of the workforce investment system to serve individuals with disabilities.

The regulations will be made available to the One-Stop service delivery system as soon as they are published by SSA. The full text of the legislation is available on the disAbility Online website at <http://wdsc.org/disability>.

3. DOL/ETA Perspective. The Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) considers the TWWIIA and Ticket program to be an opportunity to create model workforce services for people with disabilities in the One-Stop system and to be an active partner in improving employment outcomes and retention for these individuals. DOL/ETA envisions the One-Stop system as a primary Employment Network provider available to beneficiaries of SSDI and SSI as a central point of comprehensive, seamless services which incorporates expanded access to qualified and expert employment, training or rehabilitation providers.

It will be up to State and local Workforce Investment Areas to avail themselves of the opportunities to improved service delivery provided by the TWWIIA. DOL/ETA will work to facilitate the involvement of the workforce system and participate in policy considerations which will emerge as Ticket provisions are implemented.

The Social Security Administration has contracted with The Gallup Organization to assist the Agency in determining the level of interest of organizations in becoming Employment Networks, which will deliver employment-related services to Social Security disability beneficiaries under public law 106-170, TWWIIA. This information will be used to develop profiles of potential Employment Networks, including their capabilities, the types of services they offer, and their availability to all SSA disability beneficiaries. SSA will use these profiles to facilitate the rapid recruitment of Employment Networks within the time frames specified in the Act.

If your Workforce Investment Board or One-Stop service delivery system would like to be a part of this initiative, Gallup will mail you a copy of the questionnaire. You will also have the option of completing the questionnaire on the World Wide Web. The web site address and a unique PIN number for accessing the web questionnaire will be provided with the paper questionnaire.

Interested public or private workforce entities may call Gallup's toll-free hotline at 1-800-788-9987 or send an email to SSA_EN@gallup.com.

4. Actions Facilitating Implementation of the Ticket. DOL/ETA will issue a Solicitation for Grant Application in the spring of 2000 under a new \$20 million Work Incentive Grant program. This grant program is designed to enhance services to people with disabilities in the One-Stop system and expand One-Stop services to public and private entities that typically serve people with disabilities but are not current partners in One-Stop. A significant objective of the Work Incentive Grants is to build One-Stop infrastructures that are eligible to participate in the Ticket program as qualified Employment Networks. Eligible applicants of the SGA include consortia of public and private non-profit entities. The Department expects to announce the recipients of grant awards September 30, 2000.

Under the TWWIIA, both the Social Security Administration and the Health and Human Services Administration, Health Care Financing Administration (HHS/HCFA) are authorized to develop and implement new grant programs. The SSA is currently developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to award \$23 million for the establishment of benefits planners and assistance counselors across the country. HHS/HCFA will be awarding grants to State Medicaid agencies to expand the infrastructure for the health care buy-in component of the TWWIIA.

ETA is working closely with the President's Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, SSA and HCFA to coordinate the issuance and objectives of the respective grant programs, to the extent possible. It is hoped that many recipients of the SSA benefits planner grants will establish counselors in One-Stop Centers or develop strong

linkages with them. Additional information on the respective grant programs and other resources will be available at: <http://wdsc.org/disability> as soon as each agency announces and issues its solicitations.

DOL/ETA participated in SSA sponsored forums that were being held across the country to disseminate information on the provisions of the TWWIA, as well as the Workforce Investment Act, to disability consumer organizations and providers. Additional information on efforts to implement TWWIA can be found at <http://www.ssa.gov/work/>.

5. Action Required. Recipients are requested to distribute this TEIN with attachments to the State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, and with other workforce development Partners.

6. Inquiries. Questions should be directed to Alexandra Kielty or Jim Downing, 202-219-5500.

7. Attachments.

- Questions and Answers
- Social Security Legislative Bulletin
- Fact Sheet
- Employment Networks Questionnaire